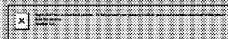


From: Joe Dorant <jdorant@moses-ma.ccsend.com> on behalf of Joe Dorant <jdorant@moses-ma.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 01, 2012 4:51 PM
To: Hanchett, James (DPH)
Subject: News: Prepped for All Hazards

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Ocean storm affect clobbers New England with over 12" of snow and blizzard-like conditions back in January 2006. (Image courtesy of NOAA.)

MOSES Member Rob Sousa Prepared for "All Hazards"

When disaster strikes – natural or manmade – it's a sure bet that MOSES member Rob Sousa played a key role in keeping you safe.

An all hazards planner with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Sousa understands the importance of planning. He is charged with maintaining the Electronic Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, or eCEMP, a web-based program that helps the Emergency Management Directors in each of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns develop their plans for implementation in the event of natural and other disasters.

Sousa shares, "MEMA uses an all hazards approach, be it natural, such as snow and flooding events, or man-made, like the MWRA Water Emergency in May of 2010 that affected drinking water for several days in 30+ communities within the Boston area."

The planning phase accomplished via eCEMP allows him to remotely train and support local Emergency Management Directors – fire and police chiefs, as well as other key town officials – as he or she puts their specific town's plan together. Functions within eCEMP include data collection and maintenance; attachment of plans or images; the ability to print all or portions of the plan; geographic information functionality and generation of numerous reports relating to available fire, police, public works, emergency, communication and transportation inventories in real time.

"This is a very in-depth, multi-platform vehicle that allows each town Emergency Management Director to tailor their plan, as well as share this information with us here at the state MEMA level and even, if need be, with FEMA depending on the severity of the event," he further clarifies.

Like many MEMA employees, Sousa wears several hats. When activated during an event, such as this past summer's devastating tornadoes or Halloween's surprise snow storm, he takes on a different role. Sousa explains, "When an event happens, my responsibility is to map affected areas through the Geographic Information System (GIS), to keep emergency personnel up-to-date on road access, closures and dangers. These maps also keep resources moving during an emergency." This also includes mapping out shelter locations, status of same, rivers threatening to flood, etc. Local directors are then able to access the Web Emergency Operation Center in real time so they instantly can see what areas are at risk within their community.

But Sousa's work isn't done yet. The recovery phase following any event will find him on the ground in an area deemed a disaster zone and providing support within the Disaster Recovery Center. This is where people can go and get help after the disaster. From providing shelter and emergency food stamps to managing the most basic of immediate needs, the Disaster Recovery Center serves as a one-stop shopping experience for all people impacted during the event. He states, "Bottom line? We never say 'no' when asked to help."

Kurt Schwartz, MEMA director, concludes, "All-Hazard Planners such as Rob are a key part to the success and effectiveness of all emergency plans. I urge everyone to bookmark the agency's website at <http://www.mass.gov/mema> and for current news, happenings or updates, friend us on Facebook at Massachusetts Emergency Management Association or follow us on Twitter @MassEMA."

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